

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, December 20. 1707.

EXclaiming in my last at the miserable Cause, and more miserable Party now carrying it on in *England*, in order to curse our Blessings, and bring us back to the *Aegyptian* Bondage of Arbitrary Government; I began to descend to the Steps taken at this Time, to draw us into Dislike of the present Foundation on which we stand, and to introduce the old Absurdities we have so happily overthrown—I told you how they amuse us with false News on one hand, and false Principles on the other; one goes about giving wrong Intelligence, another spreading corrupted Doctrines, and what Influence this has among us illustrated by *Scotland*.

Spreading evil Reports I hinted at in my last, I come now to the Case of preaching up corrupted Principles; and among these one is now started by the eminent Mr. *Lefly*,

tho' he has thought fit to be ashamed to second it with any such thing as we call Proofs—He alledg'd, *That we can have no Uniting to make us Happy in Britain, but in a Union of Principles.*

I need not make a Comment upon this Text; nor note, that this strikes both at the Union of *Scotland*, and at the Toleration in *England*; for by this Doctrine both these must be overthrown, and all that dissent from the Church reduc'd to her Obedience, or the Kingdom otherwise deliver'd of them, *the shortest Way*, I mean, by the Methods expos'd in that Book.

Would any Man in *England* but be satisfied, however dear it cost, that he wrote that Book call'd *the shortest Way*, &c. If what this Gentleman has advanced be true, I have certainly more to boast of it in the Writing it, than ever I pretended to before, since I have

have the daily Sanction of this Author and all his Friends to the Truth of it——And however they thought fit, according to the common Justice of the Party, to let go their Rage at the Author; yet 'tis plain, the *High Church* approved the Method, and do still insist upon it, and the great Mr. *Leffly* justifies it in this Article, that 'tis absolutely necessary to the Happiness of the Nation that there be a Union of Principles, *Anglicè*, that the *Dissenters* be reduced, and so on *Mutatis Mutandis*, as is express'd in the Pamphlet call'd *The shortest Way with the Dissenters*.

Blush then, ye Tyrants of the Party, that sacrific'd the Man to the Lust of your Revenge, only for detecting you of that which you are not ashamed to own in Fact, and justify in Practice——Can there be no Union in *England* to make us happy without a Union of Principles? Good Mr. *Leffly* call in all the Help then, which can be had, to show us a *Medium* between this and sending all the *Dissenters* to the Gallows and the Gallies; you will certainly never unite them to your Principles, and consequently we can never be happy; for I cannot suppose you will say, *you may unite to theirs*; either then you must hang, banish, and destroy the *Dissenters*, or you can never have a Union of Principles, and without it no Happiness.

Wherefore I say it again, by this Doctrine, the System of *the shortest Way* is absolutely justify'd, or *England* must be pleas'd with being for ever unhappy, that is, compleatly miserable.

But why no Happiness without a Union of Principles? I have offer'd the Author of this to discourse it with him calmly, and gave him Time for it; but he is pleas'd to decline it still, and therefore I shall only make a few Remarks.

1. Will not that Condition render us happy in which other Nations are happy? To make out that Negative, it must be prov'd, that something more is required to form our Happiness, than the Happiness of other Nations; now we find other Nations compleatly happy, as *Happiness with Respect to Government is to be understood*, tho' there is not among them a Union of Principles.

I shall not define the Meaning of Happiness in Government, so as to limit any Man's Construction, but I think, *Safety* and *Peace* fully denominate the Happiness of a Government; both these we find in the Government of *Holland*, *Hannover*, *Munster*, the *Palatinate*, and several other Governments in the World, where there is no Union of Principles: And what has *England* in her Constitution, that *Safety* and *Peace* should not make us happy?—Now if *Safety* and *Peace* is the Happiness of our Nation, as I believe is easie to prove; then if we can be *Safe* and at *Peace* without a Union of Principles, we may also be happy without it.

It remains then to prove, we may be both in *Peace* and *Safety* without a Union of Principles, I might do this by a short Turn upon Parliamentary Authority, *Viz.* The Vote of the Lords, *That the Church of England is at present by GOD's Blessing in a safe and flourishing Condition*; but I wave that Advantage, and apply my self to another Kind of Proof.

Nor will I enter upon any Dangers, the *Dissenters* may be said to be in, which may certainly be proved from all the Topicks, from which the Danger of the Church may be proved—But I lay this down as a Maxim, That where the Law has its uninterrupted Course, that People must be safe, and where Charity has a mutual Intercourse, that People must be at Peace.

Now I must prove, that both these may be brought to pass in *Britain* without a Union of Principles, or else I do nothing; and in order to this, I begin with the Currency of the Laws.

The free uninterrupted Course of the Laws respects Justice, Right, and Civil Liberty; this can by no Means clash with our Religious Principles, 'tis certainly agreeable to all the Principles, in which we ought to agree, That Robbers, Murderers, and Breakers of the Peace should be punish'd, that Property should be protected, the Invaders of it restrain'd, Encroachers upon others Men's Right pursued, and in short that civil Justice should have its Course: Let the Gentlemen that object shew us, which of their Principles are inconsistent with the Execution of common Justice; I am sure,

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none of the *Dissenters* Principles are so, the Administration of Justice, and Currency of the Law cannot be destructive of any of the Principles of the Protestant Religion; and therefore whether our Principles agree or not, Justice may be equally dispensed, and consequently Safety be procur'd.

If there are any People among us, that think they cannot be safe while any Men are among them, who differ from them, 'tis some Scandal both upon their Principles, as well as upon themselves—Upon their Principles, as if they would not stand upon their own Feet, would not bear out and defend themselves; and *secondly* upon their Party, as afraid they should not stand by their Principles; the Christian Religion has stood upon the Foundation of its own Energy, and the efficacious Workings of the Spirit of GOD, and has maintain'd its Footing among all the opposite Powers of Men and Devils, and will do so to the End of the World; and what Jealousie of Fear any true Branch of it can have, that it should not dare to suffer a differing Opinion, tho' agreeing in Doctrine, to reside upon the same Continent with it, I cannot imagine.

It is most certain, that the Church of *England*, both in its Constitution and its Profession, may be safe, and is safe in the Protection of the Laws of this Land, notwithstanding the Difference in Opinion which is now so far extended among us; and if She is safe, She is happy, as far as Happiness respects her temporal Condition—Nay, by the Union of *Scotland*, I undertake to prove, the Church of *England* is yet more safe than before, as her Safety is now blended or twisted with the Establish'd Constitution of whole United *Britain*, and cannot be shaken but by the overturning the Foundation on which we all stand; if this is not reckoned

perfect Safety, then no Nation in the World can be safe; for human Policy can form no greater Safety, than the united Posture of our Nation, as now Establish'd, stands upon.

The Safety of the Church of *England*, as built upon the Union, consists in this, that the present constituted Authority of the Government, whether Regally or Parliamentarily consider'd, is inferior to that Authority, upon whose Act and Deed the present Establishment of the Church is built. In the Churches present Capacity, not the Parliament, not the QUEEN, not the QUEEN and Parliament can unhinge her; why? Because they cannot act in Contravention of the Union, which is superior to all our present Authority, the present Authority being constituted by it.

Who, that is capable to take in this plain, very plain System, of Power constituting, and Power constituted, can have so much Want of Sense, as to dispute the the Safety of the present Establish'd Constitution of the Church, in which all our Difference of Principles is not able to make the least Breach; well might the House of Lords vote her Safe and Flourishing, for She was never so Safe as since the Union.

Nor is the Church of *Scotland* less safe, tho' far different in Principles also, and their Safety as reciprocal, is equally founded on the same Rock, the Union; they are Twins of this Birth, brought forth at once, and ought not to disdain to call one another Sisters: I wish, the Fraternal Affection of either hand were better improved; which tho' it would not add to their Safety, *for nothing can add to that*, but it would add to their Honour, to their Ease, to their Satisfaction, and to their mutual Reputation in the World; Things I humbly recommend to them both to consider.

MISCELLANEA.

IT is with Joy, that every Man, who regards the *English* Interest, and understands it, reads, that the Parliament are enquiring into the State of our Plantations; it is a Subject, as vast as the Wilderness, they are planted in, or the Ocean that divides us from